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CURRENT LEGAL PERIODICALS AND BOOK REVIEWS.

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF BUSINESS LAW AND FORMS FOR BUSINESSMEN, FARMERS, MECHANICS, LANDLORDS, TENANTS, WORKINGMEN, CAPITALISTS, AND ALL WHO HAVE BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS OF ANY KIND, AS WELL AS FOR LAWYERS AND CONVEYANCERS. Representing the Study and Decisions of Most Able Lawyers and Supreme Judicial Authorities. For all the States and Canada. With Notes and Authorities. By Hon. HUGH M. SPALDING, author of Spalding's Treatise upon the Law of Personal Property, Practice, etc., for the States of Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Kansas; Civil Service of the State of Pennsylvania: Judicial and Public Records; Legal Forms, etc., etc. Pp. i + 702. Revised Edition. Philadelphia: P. W. Ziegler & Co., 1903.

The purpose of the author of the above work is to give to laymen a reference book of law. Some of the reasons he gives

for the publication of the above volume are as follows: 1. "There are times when legal counsel cannot be had." 2. "There are times and circumstances which render it advisable to be one's own legal counsellor." 3. "Ignorance of the law is no excuse."

The above purpose is a very laudable one, and it would be a great privilege to the busy merchant or isolated farmer to be able to turn over a few pages and learn what the law is on some vexatious question, and not have to waste time or money in consulting counsel. But the many previous efforts to give the public a book of the kind have proved pretty conclusively that the value of such a work must be extremely limited.

Well might such volumes be compared to the numerous works on "Household Medicine." One of the latter gives as a cure for apoplexy: "Give the patient a drink of cold water and run for the nearest doctor." The water was possibly a momentary relief, but the physician had to be consulted. So in the law, the brief treatment of the various topics in a work like the above, may in some cases afford the layman some mental refreshment or even give him some slight knowledge of his case. But so brief a work cannot be comprehensive enough to be of any real value, and the references are made to books which no layman possesses; surely it is cheaper and safer to retain a lawyer than buy a law library.

To the legal profession the book can be of little value, for while it is nominally an encyclopedia of law and forms, its scope is so great and its pages so few as to render thorough treatment of any single topic impossible

R. B. W.

A TREATISE ON COMMERCIAL PAPER AND THE NEGOTIABLE INSTRUMENTS LAW, INCLUDING THE LAW RELATING TO PROMISSORY NOTES, BILLS OF EXCHANGE, CHECKS, MUNICIPAL BONDS AND OTHER NEGOTIABLE AND NON-NEGOTIABLE INSTRUMENTS, COMMONLY CLASSED AS COMMERCIAL PAPER, WITH AN APPENDIX CONTAINING THE NEGOTIABLE INSTRUMENTS LAW AND THE ENGLISH BILLS OF EXCHANGE ACT. By JAMES W. EATON, late Lecturer on the Law of Contracts and Negotiable Instruments in the Albany Law School, and on Evidence in the Boston University Law School; former editor of the American Bankruptcy Reports and author of Eaton on Equity, and of the Third Edition of Collier on Bankruptcy: and FRANK B. GILBERT, author of Gilbert on Domestic Relations, etc. Pp. iii–xciii + 1–767. Albany, N. Y.: Matthew Bender. 1903.

The law of negotiable instruments occupies a rather unique position because of its immense importance in commercial